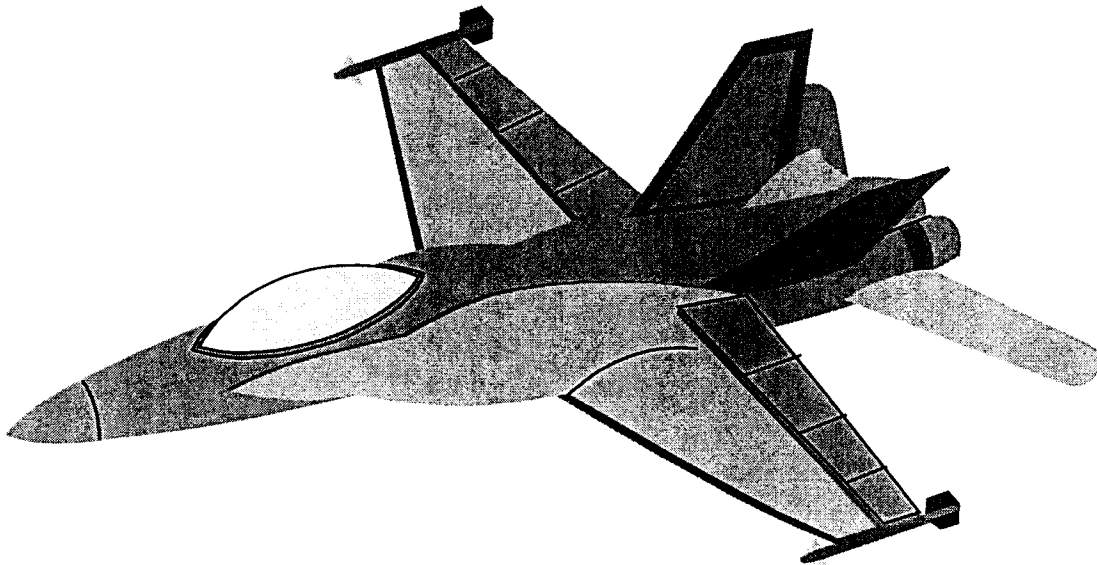


SUPERVISORS' GUIDE
TO THE
STUDENT TEMPORARY
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
(STEP)



July 1999

FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

Introduction

The Student Temporary Employment Program – formerly the Stay-In-School Program – is a program designed both to provide money enabling a student to continue with his or her education, and provide the student with valuable practical work experience. Benefits to Edwards Air Force Base include temporary personnel to fill gaps caused by current downsizing, and eager students willing to learn valuable skills.

This handbook was designed to help you, as the supervisor, to learn more about the program as a whole, and to answer the commonly asked question of “Now that I have a student employee, what do I (or can I) do with him or her? This handbook wasn’t designed to answer every question, which may arise during the course of a student’s employment, but it does provide a good base. As always, if you have further questions, please call the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) coordinator at the Civilian Personnel Flight.

The following issues will be discussed in this handbook:

- a. Types of Student Positions and Grade Levels
- b. Qualification Requirements
- c. Referral Process
- d. Work Schedules and Leave
- e. Performance and Attendance
- f. Supervisor’s Responsibilities

Positions and Grade Levels

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has removed the limitations on the generic nature of student positions. However, these are still student positions, and the majority of student employees will have limited practical or specialized experience. Temporary student positions here at Edwards AFB are traditionally filled in the clerical field, GS-1 through GS-4; and laborers, WG-1 and WG-2. Positions in the STEP program do not fall under the Acquisition Demonstration Project.

There are generic position descriptions for STEP positions. If you are not sure of the type or grade of the position you wish to fill, you will need to speak with your Position Classification Specialist at the Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF).

Promotions: Promotions are not automatic. Once the student employee has met the qualification as described in the Air Force Qualification Standard for Schedule B, Student Educational Employment Programs, and you as a supervisor feel the employee has met all applicable criteria for promotion, then a PAR may be submitted to promote him/her. This is something you (as the supervisor), along with the student, must monitor.

Note: A promotion for a temporary student employee will be processed as a “conversion to appointment not to exceed . . .”, with the original end date supplied as the NTE date. However, it is still a “promotion” with an increase in grade and salary.

Qualification Requirements

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in the STEP the following criteria must be met:

- a. Student must be a current, continuing student. If the student has had a break from school of one or more semesters/terms, then he/she is not eligible for the STEP.
- b. Must be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment if changing schools) in an accredited high school, or college, university or vocational program a minimum of half-time. For most schools, six units is considered half-time. Work experience units do not count toward that requirement. Once employed, the student must at all times maintain a minimum half-time course load.
- c. The student must demonstrate that he or she is working towards a degree or certificate.
- d. While employed, students must be in good academic standing at all times. Applicants must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.50 in order to be referred for the program. They must maintain a minimum of 2.00 **each** school term for continued employment. If the GPA falls below 2.00 at the end of the school term, the student will not be allowed to continue employment. If a student maintains a GPA of 2.00 or above, but receives a "D", they will be placed on probation for one school term. If a student receives an "F", they will be removed from the program. They grades of "D" and "F" will not be tolerated.

Failure to meet these requirements before selection will result in a rating of ineligible for the program. Failure to meet the requirements during the student's employment will result in the immediate termination of the student from the program.

In order to ensure that the requirements of the program are being adhered to, students will be required to submit pertinent documents to the STEP

coordinator. Twice a year – once in the spring and once in the fall – the STEP coordinator will send letters to the students and their supervisors reminding them to submit transcripts and school registrations. A suspense date will be indicated. If the student fails to meet the specified date, and a valid reason has not been conveyed to the coordinator, the student will be terminated from the program.

Referral Process

In order to fill a STEP position, the supervisor must submit a Personnel Action Request (PAR) to the Civilian Personnel Flight. The PAR is forwarded to the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, TX, for processing.

Referrals will be made in accordance with 5 CFR 213. Veteran's preference rules apply. A certificate of eligible applicants, along with resumes, will be provided to the selecting supervisor. Supervisors may wish to conduct interviews, but are not required to do so. The STEP Coordinator will make the final job offer.

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 2302, supervisors and managers shall not appoint, employ, promote, advance a relative (or advocate appointment or promotion) in a position where the employee exercises jurisdiction or control as an official.

Work Schedules and Overtime

Students will coordinate their work schedules with their supervisors. While school is in session, high school students may work a maximum of 20 hours per week. College students may work a maximum of 32 hours per week. All students may work full time during school vacations, or whenever school is officially closed, as long as their schedule does not exceed 40 hours per week.

Overtime: Overtime is not authorized for this program, except in emergency circumstances with the prior approval of the STEP coordinator. For our purposes, overtime is defined as more than the scheduled 20 or 32 hours per week (exception is when school is not in session, e.g., summer vacation).

Changes in Work Schedules/Hours: If a student is currently on a part-time schedule and wishes to increase or decrease the number of hours worked per pay period, a PAR must be submitted to the CPF. The nature of action will be “change in hours”. If a student wishes to work full-time during the summer, a PAR must be submitted to change the work schedule from part-time to full-time. A PAR is not needed to change the work schedule for short-term periods such as Christmas break, etc.

Leave and Extended Absences

Students earn leave at the same rates as permanent employees, depending on prior military and/or civilian service. Because of the temporary nature of their appointments, advanced leave is not authorized.

In rare circumstances, a student may be required to miss a term of school and/or an extended period of work. In those circumstances, the student must be placed on leave without pay. Written justification may be submitted through you and the STEP coordinator, to be forwarded to the Civilian Personnel Officer for approval. Approval will be granted only if the circumstances warrant it, such as illness of the student or an immediate

family member. Absences of more than one term are not authorized, and the student will be asked to resign.

Performance and Attendance

Student employees are expected to adhere to the same rules of conduct and regular attendance as permanent employees. If you find that your student is not meeting your expectations in regards to performance, attendance and/or conduct, the following steps should be taken to correct the problem:

- a. Counsel the employee. Please explain exactly what the employee is or is not doing and explain the consequences of failure to correct the behavior.
- b. If the behavior continues after counseling, you may either refer the student to the Employee Relations Specialist for additional counseling, or initiate termination. If termination is the chosen action, the STEP coordinator and Employee Relations Specialist must be informed immediately.

Remember that for many of the students, this will be their first job. On their first day of work, outline exactly what you expect from them as an employee. Be specific. If you eventually find that there is a problem which cannot be corrected, do not allow the problem to continue. Although most of them are very young, this is still a place of business, and we still have a mission to support. Just as with permanent employees, lack of attendance and performance problems cannot be tolerated.

Appraisals: Student employees are required to be given yearly performance appraisals. You may contact your Employee Relations Specialist to assist you in preparing performance plans and appraisals.

Requests for Waivers

If the supervisor wishes to request an exception too a locally established program rule, such as work schedule or GPA requirement, a letter of justification must be submitted to the Civilian Personnel Officer for final approval or disapproval.

CONCLUSION

This handbook provides general information and guidance in a variety of areas, rules, regulations, and policies which are subject to change. For further information refer to 5 CFR Parts 213 and 338, and the Civilian Personnel Office Operating Instruction. Whenever you have specific questions that require accurate, up-to-date answers, you should talk to the Civilian Personnel Office or the STEP Coordinator.